



Region 4 State Parks
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Great Falls, MT 59405
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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DECISION NOTICE
AMENDED HOST PAD IMPROVEMENT PROJECT AT
EDEN BRIDGE – SMITH RIVER STATE PARK**

April 10, 2015

Description of Proposed Action: In 2014, Montana State Parks proposed to improve the host site area at Eden Bridge located in Smith River State Park by constructing two gravel pads for recreational vehicle parking and two gravel picnic areas adjacent to each pad; Installation of two shared underground water cisterns and two underground septic holding tanks; Construction of one septic drain field; Relocation of the existing phone and electricity pedestal; Relocation of the maintenance storage shed and the entrance road to a safer location approximately 100' west of the current entrance.

Since the approval of these improvements in November 2014, Montana State Parks has reconsidered the installation of the potable water cisterns and believe a more suitable option is a drilled well. Since a drilled well, pump, and water lines were not considered in the original environmental analysis, an amended EA was issued.

Providing the basic amenities of stable and level parking pads for the volunteer hosts as well as convenient and reliable electricity, water, sewer and phone will greatly enhance the ability to recruit and retain quality hosts for the long-term, ensuring a high-quality experience for floaters and visitors.

Public Process and Comments: An Environmental Assessment proposing this action was posted on March 17, 2015 in the Public Notices section of the Montana State Parks website. Legal notices were published twice each in the *Great Falls Tribune* and *Helena Independent Record*. Public comments were taken for 21 days through April 07, 2015.

One (1) public comment was received.

Oppose (1): One comment was received in opposition to the project. It stated that volunteer hosts are not needed, space is limited for two host pads, and bed tax money should be utilized for maintenance of existing facilities.

Response

The volunteer hosts provide a wide variety of services at Eden Bridge, including the following:

- Site security for 60 plus vehicles and trailers at a given time
- Assist floaters exiting the river
- Collect floater logs containing valuable user data

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- Document incidents (emergency, life threatening and non-life threatening, law and non-law enforcement, accidents, wildlife encounters etc.)
- Site maintenance (clean/stock vault toilets, mow grass, trim trees, weed control, litter patrol, recycling etc.)
- Traffic and parking control
- Information sharing with Parks staff (incidents, wildlife encounters, hazards etc.)
- Maintain the lost and found program
- Manage Enterprise merchandise (selling Smith River T-Shirts and future merchandise)

The development of the two host pads will occur within the footprint of the two host pads that currently exist. No new areas outside of this existing area will be utilized.

The volunteer hosts maintain existing facilities at Eden Bridge including the two vault toilets, aluminum recycling center and the grounds.

Decision: Based on the Environmental Assessment (EA) and content of public comment, it is my decision to approve Alternative B, the proposed action of the amended EA, to drill a well to provide potable water source for the volunteers at Eden Bridge – Smith River State Park.

This action is subject to appeal, which must be submitted to the FWP Director in writing and postmarked within 30 days of this decision notice. The appeal must specifically describe the basis for the appeal, explain how the appellant has previously commented to the Department or participated in the decision making process and how FWP might address the concerns of the appeal.



John Taillie
Region 4 Parks Manager